



JUNE						
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# RCWD BOARD OF MANAGERS WORKSHOP

Monday, June 8, 2026, 9:00 a.m.

Rice Creek Watershed District Conference Room  
4325 Pheasant Ridge Drive NE, Suite 611, Blaine, Minnesota  
Virtual Monitoring via Zoom Webinar

Join Zoom Webinar:  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84421482283?pwd=ILTRZaNkKeh7mFYOjKeVed7cG8WKK.1>  
Passcode: 514004  
+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)  
Webinar ID: 844 2148 2283  
Passcode: 514004

## Agenda

### ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- RCWD Monitoring Program Review & Budget
- Watershed Management Plan and Local Water Plans Update Guidance
- 2026 Minnesota Watersheds Resolutions: Proposed Resolutions Comment Period

Administrator Updates (If Any)

# RCWD Monitoring Program Review & Budget

# MEMORANDUM

## Rice Creek Watershed District



**Date:** June 2, 2026  
**To:** RCWD Board of Managers  
**From:** Matt Kocian, Lake and Stream Manager  
**Subject:** RCWD Monitoring Program Review & Budget

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### Introduction

This memo will provide an introduction and notes to accompany a presentation on the RCWD's monitoring program at the June 8, 2026 Board Workshop.

### Monitoring Program Overview

The District has operated a water monitoring program since the mid-1990's. This program collects data on water volume and water quality in streams, ditches, and lakes across the watershed. Data are used to guide water resources management decisions by the Board, local and state partners, and citizen organizations (e.g. lake associations). Data are collected by RCWD staff, agency partners, and volunteer groups. Every year, district staff coordinate with agency partners and volunteer programs to ensure good geographic coverage of data collection.

Data collected as part of the RCWD's monitoring program serve many purposes, including:

Long-Term Condition Monitoring: This provides a long-term perspective of water quality and water volumes. These data are important for providing historical perspective and assessing trends. Long-term data collected by RCWD were used to document improvements in several lakes over the past 10 years.

Diagnostic: Proper diagnosis is critical to solving water resources problems. What is driving algae blooms on a lake? What is driving sedimentation in our lakes, and where is erosion worst? How should we prioritize our management actions?

*Diagnostic data collection and analysis have been critical in the District's success in obtaining grant dollars for projects.*

Project and Program Assessment: By assessing our completed projects, we can identify maintenance needs, optimize project/program operation, and identify improvements for future designs. Data collected before/after or upstream/downstream of completed projects tells us how our projects are performing. Recent projects and programs that the District is assessing with its monitoring program include the carp management program, Oneka Ridge Golf Course, Bald Eagle Lake Alum Project, Hansen Park Iron-Sand Filter, and Centennial Green Iron-Sand Filter.

# MEMORANDUM

## Rice Creek Watershed District



### **2025 Special Monitoring – Peltier Lake**

District staff have been monitoring water quality on Peltier Lake for nearly 20 years, and volunteer data go back even farther. Unfortunately, Peltier Lake suffers from high nutrient loading and frequent algae blooms.



Peltier Lake algae blooms, 2023 (left) and 2016 (right)

Past diagnostic work suggested that both external (watershed) nutrient loading and internal nutrient recycling were high, and both would need to be significantly reduced to improve water quality conditions in Peltier. The default long-term water quality goal is to meet MN State Standards. However, given the magnitude of the problem, that goal is not realistic in the short and mid-term. Thus, in lieu of “restoration”, the District is working toward interim goals that reduce the frequency and magnitude of algae blooms.

Over the past 20 years, the District has completed numerous upstream water quality improvement projects, including dozens of shoreline and stormwater projects, and stabilization of Hardwood Creek. More projects are on the horizon, including the JD3 / Clearwater Creek currently being developed by District staff and Houston Engineering.

The District has also attempted to address internal nutrient recycling with a water level drawdown. This project was inexpensive, and resulted in improved native plant coverage and diversity. However, water quality conditions remain unchanged. Research suggests that Peltier Lake is a poor candidate for traditional aluminum sulfate treatments, as on Bald Eagle and Centerville Lakes.

This summer, to better diagnose internal nutrient processes, the District’s monitoring team will be collecting additional data on Peltier Lake, including a thermistor chain. This may lead to a future trial project, utilizing new aluminum sulfate technologies.

# MEMORANDUM

## Rice Creek Watershed District



### **Curlyleaf Pondweed Program – Program Review**

The District has been managing curlyleaf pondweed (*Potamogeton crispus*, or “CLP”) for more than 20 years. CLP is an aquatic invasive species, ubiquitous in the Twin Cities area, and found in most RCWD lakes. Unlike native lake plants, CLP begins growing in the fall and survives under winter ice. In the spring, dense growth can displace native plants, be a recreational nuisance, and release accumulated nutrients when it dies in mid-summer. This last impact is the justification for RCWD management. RCWD’s Aquatic Invasive Species Policy states that the District actively manages those species that degrade water quality. It also states that the scientific link between species and water quality impact will be periodically reviewed. RCWD staff are doing that now.

At the workshop, we will review research and data on CLP and water quality, and explore potential program changes.

### **2027 Budget Considerations**

#### 90-04 - Monitoring

Key budget expenditures include:

- Laboratory expenses. The District uses a certified commercial lab to process all water samples.
- Equipment. The District uses various probes and sensors to monitor water levels and parameters, such as temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, and conductivity.
- Partner support. The District pays some agency partners (e.g. Ramsey County and SWCDs) for monitoring services. RCWD also supports several volunteer programs by paying for lab costs.
- Lake plants and sediment. The District collects plant data to support local partners as they consider management of invasive species (e.g. Eurasian watermilfoil). We also collect sediment chemistry data in lakes, assessing internal phosphorus loading.

In 2024, to account for inflationary increases, the 90-04 budget was increased from \$200,000 to \$240,000. Since then, this budget has been flat. Another inflation-level increase (2-4%) may be needed for 2027 to account for rising prices in services and equipment.

#### 90-26 – Carp Management

Key budget expenditures include:

- Labor for equipment installation, and carp removal and disposal
- Specialized equipment and services (electrical)

Most of this budget is used to manage carp in the Long Lake / Lino Chain of Lakes system. This budget has been flat at \$200,000 since its inception about a decade ago. In recent years, costs for managing carp have dropped, as the carp population in the Long Lake / Lino Chain have been reduced by 80%. At the same time, demand for carp management services from other areas – notably, Silver Lake – has increased. These two forces balance out, and staff recommend a flat budget.

#### 90-27 – Curlyleaf Pondweed Management

This budget is wholly used to pay for professional services – herbicide applicators. This budget was reduced from \$50,000 to \$40,000 in 2026. Staff recommend a flat budget in 2027.

**MEMORANDUM**  
**Rice Creek Watershed District**



RCWD Monitoring Team, clockwise from top-left: aquatic plant survey on Lake Johanna; flow monitoring in Judicial Ditch 3; chlorophyll-a filter apparatus (for measuring algae); Kemmerer sampler for deep lake water sampling; thermistor chain buoy on Peltier; winter chloride monitoring on Golden Lake

# **Watershed Management Plan and Local Water Plans Update Guidance**

# MEMORANDUM

## Rice Creek Watershed District



**Date:** June 3, 2026  
**To:** RCWD Board of Managers  
**From:** Sara Belden, Project Technician  
**Subject:** Watershed Management Plan and Local Water Plans Update Guidance

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### **Introduction**

The District is due to update the Watershed Management Plan (WMP) for 2030-2039 and municipalities with their Local Water Plans (LWPs). It will involve a thorough planning effort among the Board, Staff, District Engineer, and City partners. In order to identify priorities and goals for District efforts in the coming years, early coordination is essential. The attached HEI memo outlines some key initial steps and provides a timeline for the entire process.

### **Background**

The District's WMP effort is a collaborative effort with partners to define and plan for the water resources of the District. Our Municipal partners LWPs requirements are approved by the District as well as approved by the Metropolitan Council in 2028. The LWPs are a portion of the municipal Comprehensive Plan Updates. The Met Council approves the LWPs and the RCWD Board of Managers approve/adopt the Plans as well. To ensure that efforts are coordinated with city partners, early collaboration is essential. In order to help guide LWPs through the layered process, future District goals, priorities, and projects will need to be considered. Staff will be meeting with City partners to convey the future direction of the District and incorporate outcomes of LWPs into the 2030 Watershed Management Plan.

### **Staff Recommendation**

This memo serves to inform the Board of the nature of the Watershed Management Plan update process. Future task orders and scheduling requirements are anticipated.

### **Attachments**

- HEI Memo: Guidance for District Support of Local Water Plans

# Technical Memorandum

**To:** Nick Tomczik, District Administrator  
Rice Creek Watershed District

**From:** Rachel Olm, MS  
Houston Engineering, Inc.

**Subject:** Guidance for District Support of Local Water Plans

**Date:** June 3, 2026

**Project:** R005555-0377

## 1. Key Takeaways

- Local Water Plans (LWPs) are required for all Rice Creek Watershed District (RCWD, or District) cities and are recommended to be submitted for District review and approval by February of 2028.
- City Comprehensive Plan updates are due by December 31, 2028. Comprehensive Plans contain Local Water Plans, oftentimes as a chapter or Appendix. These LWPs must describe how, or to what extent cities are responsible for implementing the Rice Creek Watershed District Watershed Management Plan (WMP).
- The District WMP must be approved by March of 2030. Once the new WMP is approved, cities may need to update LWPs to be consistent with the WMP.
- To minimize the inconvenience for District cities to update LWPs pre-Comprehensive Plan and post-WMP update, the District should begin communications with District cities to review the LWP planning process, required elements of the plans, and timelines. The District can also proactively communicate if any changes are expected regarding District priorities, goals, data (e.g. modeling), or controls and city requirements. This communication can also further the visioning of capital projects identified within the LWP and WMP updates. To provide the greatest opportunity for state and federal project funding and minimize need for LWP updates, it is critically important that priorities and projects are well-described and consistent between the LWPs and the District WMP.

## 2. Local Water Plans and the Watershed Management Plan

### 2.1. Coordination

Both RCWD and District cities are required by statute to conduct surface water planning. The RCWD is required to draft and implement a WMP under Minnesota Statute 103B.231, and District cities are required to draft LWPs under Minnesota Statute 103B.235. LWPs for District cities must be consistent with the District’s WMP, must define standards of the WMP, and must be approved by the District.

The various levels of water planning within the District can be confusing. Table 1 is a guide which summarizes planning for each entity.

**Table 1. Guide to water planning**

Name	Applies to	Approved by	Required by	Timeline
Watershed Management Plans (WMPs)	Metro Area Watershed Management Organizations or Districts	BWSR	MN Statute 103B.231	10 Year timeline. RCWD WMP must be approved by March 2030.
Local Water Plans (LWPs) <i>Also referred to as Local Surface Water Plans (LSWPs) or Local Water Management Plans (LWMPs)</i>	Cities	Met Council as part of Comprehensive Plan  (RCWD must review and approve, see Figure 2)	MN Statute 103B.235,  MN Statute 473.859 subd. 2	LWPs should be submitted to the District by February 2028.  LWPs are due within Comprehensive Plans by Dec 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2028*.  An additional update may be needed post-2030 District WMP update.
Comprehensive Plans	Cities	Met Council	MN Statute 462.355	2050 plans are due by Dec 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2028, which requires review to begin no later than May 2028.

\*LWPs updated within two years of the Comprehensive Plan deadline (i.e. 2027 through 2028) are considered active and do not need updating. LWPs adopted prior to December 31st 2026 must be updated before incorporation in the Metropolitan Council 2050 Comprehensive Plan

#### 2.1.1. District WMP and LWP Schedule

To meet the deadline of adoption of the updated WMP by March 2030, RCWD is encouraged to begin plan development in December of 2028 and begin strategic planning in March 2027. A draft timeline is developed, and is subject to change based on Board discussion (Figure 1).

The RCWD must review and approve LWPs during a 60-day review. Met Council and Washington County (as they have a groundwater plan) will review LWPs concurrently but within a 45-day window, leaving time for the RCWD to consider both comments. RCWD must not approve a LWP prior to reviewing Met Council comments. Of note is the new requirement for a Board resolution approving LWPs. A full timeline of the review process is presented in Figure 2.



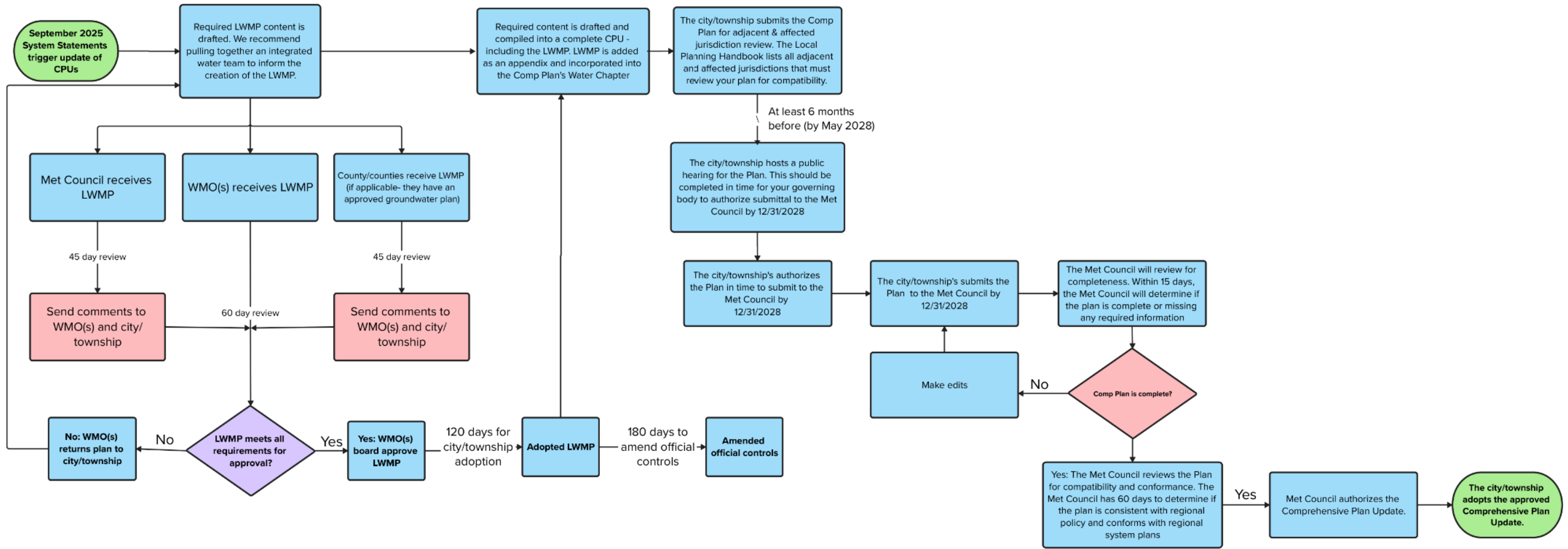


Figure 2. Met Council (draft) flowchart of Local Water Management Planning and Comprehensive Planning

## 2.2. District Watershed Management Plan Content

RCWD is required to:

*“specify the nature of the official controls required to be adopted by the local units of government, including uniform erosion control, stormwater retention, and wetland protection ordinances in the metropolitan area.” —MN Statute 103B.231 Subd. 6(b),*

And,

*“An organization plan must specify to what degree the organization plan may be adopted by reference by a local government unit for all or part of its local water plan. Upon request of a local government unit, an organization must provide a list to the local government unit and the plan review agencies of local water plan revisions necessary for compliance with the organization plan. A local water plan may serve as a stormwater pollution prevention program if it is approved by the Pollution Control Agency and it complies with the requirements of any applicable national pollutant discharge elimination system/state disposal system stormwater permit.*

*A plan must include a schedule for implementation of local water plans that requires all local water plans to be adopted not more than two years before the local comprehensive plan is due. A plan must not deviate from the schedule. Extensions of local comprehensive plan due dates do not alter the schedule. Organizations may extend all or portions of local water plans to align with the local comprehensive plan schedule during the initial three years of transition to the amended rule. Notwithstanding local water plan schedules in previously approved plans, all local water plans must be adopted according to this subpart after December 31, 2016..” —MN Rules 8410.0105 Subd. 9*

The 2020 WMP meets these requirements and language can largely be used as a starting point for the 2030 plan update. If RCWD intends to alter controls, that should be communicated to cities. The RCWD may propose alternative controls or places additional requirements in the WMP; in this case, some cities may be required to update their LWP post-WMP update.

In RCWD, three cities (Circle Pines, Hugo, and Mounds View) have assumed responsibility for permitting and enforcement of District rules. Pursuant to RCWD’s WMP, these cities must meet additional requirements (referred to as “Level 2 requirements”) as they complete their comprehensive plan updates. No additional cities have expressed intent to the RCWD to expand responsibilities.

RCWD may require cities to include additional content in their plans if desired, such as include WMP goals.

## 2.3. Local Water Plan Content

LWPs are required to describe responsibilities of implementing the RCWD WMP.

*“After the watershed plan is approved and adopted, or amended, pursuant to section 103B.231, the local government units having land use planning and regulatory responsibility for territory within the watershed shall prepare or cause to be prepared a local water management plan, capital improvement program, and official controls as necessary to bring local water management into conformance with the watershed plan within the time period prescribed in the implementation program of the watershed plan and, as necessary, shall prepare or cause to be prepared amendments to the local comprehensive plan.”* —MN Statute 103B.235 Subd. 1(a)

A Capital Improvement Project table is a required element of a LWP. The LWP update presents an opportunity for cities to update their Capital Improvement Plans, which can then inform the District WMP update.

## 2.4. District Cities

**Table 2. Summary of District Cities and Local Water Plans**

Name	Location and Link to LWP
City of Arden Hills	<a href="#">Appendix F</a> of Comprehensive Plan
City of Birchwood Village	<a href="#">Chapter 6</a> of Comprehensive Plan
City of Blaine	<a href="#">Appendix B</a> of Comprehensive Plan
City of Centerville	Appendix A of Comprehensive Plan
City of Circle Pines	Available upon request
City of Columbia Heights	<a href="#">Appendix D</a> of Comprehensive Plan
City of Columbus	<a href="#">Appendix B</a> of Comprehensive Plan
City of Dellwood	<a href="#">Page 59</a> of Comprehensive Plan
City of Falcon Heights	<a href="#">Appendix B</a> of Comprehensive Plan
City of Forest Lake	<a href="#">Appendix G</a> of Comprehensive Plan
City of Fridley	<a href="#">Appendix D</a> of Comprehensive Plan
City of Grant	<a href="#">Appendix B</a> of Comprehensive Plan
City of Hugo	<a href="#">Chapter 10</a> of Comprehensive Plan
City of Lauderdale	Available upon request
City of Lexington	Available upon request
City of Lino Lake	<a href="#">Appendix A</a> of Comprehensive Plan
Mahtomedi	Separate <a href="#">document</a> from Comprehensive Plan
May Township	<a href="#">Page 98</a> of Comprehensive Plan

Name	Location and Link to LWP
Mounds View	Available upon request
New Brighton	<a href="#">Appendix E</a> of Comprehensive Plan
Roseville	<a href="#">Chapter 10</a> of Comprehensive Plan
Saint Anthony	<a href="#">Appendix</a> of Comprehensive Plan
Scandia	<a href="#">Appendix H</a> of Comprehensive Plan
Shoreview	<a href="#">Appendix III</a> of Comprehensive Plan
Spring Lake Park	<a href="#">Appendix E</a> of Comprehensive Plan
White Bear Lake	<a href="#">Appendix B</a> of Comprehensive Plan
White Bear Township	<a href="#">Appendix H</a> of Comprehensive Plan
Willernie	<a href="#">Appendix 2</a> of Comprehensive Plan

### 3. Recommendations

To minimize the inconvenience for District cities to update LWPs pre-Comprehensive Plan and post-WMP update, the District should begin communications with District cities to review the LWP planning process, required elements of the plans, and timelines. At that time (or as a result of the Strategic Direction Process) the District can also proactively communicate anticipated changes regarding District priorities, goals, or controls and city requirements. This helps LWPs maintain consistency with the WMP.

During proactive discussions with District cities, the RCWD may also want to provide updates on District data (e.g. modeling), and the degree to which the District WMP can be adopted by reference. Proactive communication with District cities can also further the visioning of capital projects identified within the LWP and WMP updates. To provide the greatest opportunity for state and federal project funding and minimize need for LWP updates, it is critically important that priorities and projects are well-described and consistent between the LWPs and the District WMP.

RCWD staff will soon present 2027 budgeting recommendations that will include allocations for strategic direction planning in advance of the plan development process. We anticipate this strategic direction process (which will include District staff, Managers, and consultants) would take place during several special Board workshops. As such, budgeting recommendations may include an increase in per-diems.

# **2026 Minnesota Watersheds Resolutions: Proposed Resolutions Comment Period**

# MEMORANDUM

## Rice Creek Watershed District



**Date:** June 2, 2026  
**To:** RCWD Board of Managers  
**From:** Kendra Sommerfeld, Communications/Outreach Manager  
**Subject:** 2026 MN Watersheds Resolutions: Proposed Resolutions Comment Period

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### **Introduction**

Minnesota Watersheds has distributed the submitted 2026 resolutions for member review as part of its annual policy development process. These resolutions, submitted by watershed districts and partner organizations across the state, will be considered for adoption at the Minnesota Watersheds Annual Meeting and may help shape future legislative priorities and organizational positions.

### **Background**

The submitted resolutions are currently available for member review and comment. Minnesota Watersheds is encouraging member organizations to evaluate the proposals and provide feedback regarding their potential support, concerns, or suggested revisions. Comments received will help inform discussions by the Legislative Committee and may influence modifications prior to final consideration and voting at the Annual Meeting.

Staff provided the Board with the packet of submitted resolutions for review. Managers are asked to consider whether any of the proposed resolutions align with Rice Creek Watershed District priorities, ongoing initiatives, or legislative interests.

### **Request for Board Consensus**

The Board is asked to:

- Review the submitted 2026 Minnesota Watersheds resolutions.
- Identify any concerns, recommended changes, or additional considerations regarding the submitted resolutions.
- Comments or feedback from the Board will be provided to Jan Voit, Minnesota Watersheds Executive Director, for consideration as part of the resolution review process.

### **Attachments**

2026 Submitted Resolutions

# Background Information

## 2026 Minnesota Watersheds Resolution #1

**Proposing Watershed:** Wild Rice Watershed District

**Name:** Tara Jensen, Administrator

**Phone Number:** 218-784-5501

**Email Address:** tara@wildricewatershed.org

**Resolution Title:** Encouraging DNR and USFWS to Construct Retention Sites on DNR and USFWS Lands for Storing Water

**Background that led to the submission of this resolution**

Our Board of Managers feels that land owned by DNR and USFWS would provide opportunities for retention sites to store excess waters on wetlands owned and controlled by DNR and USFWS.

**Efforts to solve the problem**

Our staff has worked with DNR to construct a control structure on the Goose Prairie WMA to allow excessive flood waters to be held during an identified date range in the spring. We would like there to be more effort and communication to encourage DNR and USFWS to review other parcels in which water could be stored to alleviate downstream flooding impacts.

**Is legislative action the best means of addressing the matter? If yes, what is the purpose or intent of your proposal? If not, what advocacy steps could be taken with state or local government officials?**

Communicate the possibility to utilize public lands to store water with legislators in an effort to have them support the resolution and develop a committee to review public lands and potential storage opportunities which can occur on them.

**Anticipated support or opposition:**

This resolution would be of interest to other watershed districts, counties, cities and wildlife organizations.

**This issue (check all that apply)**

Applies only to our district		Requires legislative action	
Applies only to 1 or 2 regions		Requires state agency advocacy	x
Applies to the entire state	x	Impacts MW bylaws or MOPP	

**RESOLUTION #1: ENCOURAGING DNR AND USFWS TO CONSTRUCT RETENTION SITES ON DNR AND USFWS LANDS FOR STORING WATER**

**WHEREAS**, the WRWD discussed the frequent, severe floods within the State of Minnesota and further discussed ways to reduce flood impacts; and

**WHEREAS**, it is the WRWD's desire for watershed districts and other drainage authorities within the State of Minnesota to discuss with the DNR and the USFWS about the construction of retention sites on certain existing wetlands owned by the Minnesota DNR and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the temporary diversion and storage of excess water in times of major flood events within said retention sites as doing so would reduce flood impacts to both private and public property.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds appoint a committee to meet with the DNR and USFWS, identify existing wetlands owned by DNR and USFWS that could serve as retention sites, and discuss the potential for construction of retention sites and storage of excess waters on said existing wetlands owned and controlled by DNR and USFWS in times of major flood events.

## Summary Background and Rationale for Shoreline Management Resolutions

### Background that led to the submission of these resolutions

Minnesota’s natural shorelines are continuing to disappear, contributing to degraded lake water quality, reduced habitat, and declining aquatic biological health. The 2023 Natural Shoreline Partnership report, *Minnesota’s Vanishing Natural Shorelines: A Loss that Contributes to Degraded Lake Quality*, found that approximately 40 to 50 percent of Minnesota’s natural shorelines have already been lost, and that natural shoreline loss is continuing at an estimated rate of 1 to 2 percent per decade. The report also found that mowed “lawn down to lake” shorelines allow 7 to 9 times more phosphorus to enter lakes than naturally vegetated shorelines and recommends a reasonable protection and restoration goal that 75 percent of a shoreline exist in natural vegetation at least 25 feet landward from the lake.

To explore this issue in greater depth, the statewide Natural Shoreline Partnership formed a Shoreline Protection Subcommittee to identify ways to improve how state agencies, local governments, SWCDs, watershed districts, and other partners regulate and provide technical services for shoreline property owners. The Subcommittee met several times between September 2024 and April 2025 to review challenges with existing state and local rules, DNR Public Water Restoration Rules, shoreline assessments, sand blankets, ice heaves, general permits, and DNR enforcement procedures.

A central conclusion of the Subcommittee was that Minnesota’s public waters rules are not necessarily the primary barrier to natural shoreline protection. Rather, many of the most significant challenges arise from how shoreline alteration rules are explained to the public, how those rules are administered, how consistently they are applied, and how state and local governments coordinate on projects that often affect areas both above and below the ordinary high water level.

Several recurring issues were identified. Public-facing DNR guidance for riprap, sand blankets, and ice-heave repair may be outdated, misunderstood, or applied inconsistently. “No permit required” shoreline activities can be difficult to track and verify. Criteria for determining demonstrated erosion need are not always clear. Coordination among DNR, SWCDs, watershed districts, counties, cities, and townships varies across the state. Public agencies have also lost technical capacity for natural shoreline restoration, bioengineered stabilization, and field-based landowner assistance.

These issues create practical problems for landowners, contractors, local governments, and state agencies. Landowners may receive inconsistent information. Contractors may rely on long-standing practices that do not fully protect natural shoreline functions. Local governments may be asked to respond to shoreline impacts without adequate funding, training, or technical support. DNR staff may face increasing expectations without updated guidance, consistent procedures, or sufficient interagency coordination.

The following four resolutions are intended to address these related but distinct needs:

1. **Dedicated State Funding for Local Shoreline Management Assistance** — to build local capacity for landowner assistance, site evaluations, project review, restoration support, and permit coordination.
2. **Statewide Shoreline Management Training and Certification Program** — to improve consistency and technical understanding among state and local staff involved in shoreline evaluation, restoration, permitting, compliance, and landowner assistance.
3. **Updated Public Shoreline Guidance and Education** — to replace outdated public-facing shoreline alteration guidance and improve statewide communication about natural shoreline protection, bioengineering, riprap, sand blankets, ice-heave repair, permits, and alternatives to hard armoring.
4. **Public Waters Rule and Process Improvements for Shoreline Alterations** — to improve consistency in DNR implementation, develop clearer shoreline evaluation procedures, strengthen coordination among agencies and local governments, address recurring contractor violations, and improve rule and process clarity.

Together, these resolutions request that Minnesota Watersheds support state agency advocacy and, where necessary, legislative action to improve natural shoreline protection and restoration. The intent is not to create unnecessary regulation, but to make shoreline management more consistent, practical, understandable, and effective for landowners, contractors, local governments, and state agencies while better protecting Minnesota's public waters and natural shoreline functions.

This issue applies statewide and affects watershed districts, watershed management organizations, SWCDs, counties, cities, townships, lake associations, landowners, contractors, DNR, BWSR, MPCA, and other partners involved in shoreline management and public waters protection.

# **Background Information**

## **2026 Minnesota Watersheds Resolution #2**

**Proposing Watershed:** Carnelian Marine St. Croix Watershed District

**Contact Name:** Mike Isensee

**Phone Number:** 612-839-6492

**Email Address:** mike.isensee@cmsc wd.org

**Resolution Title:** Supporting Dedicated State Funding for SWCD and Watershed District Shoreline Management Assistance

### **Background that led to the submission of this resolution**

Minnesota's natural shorelines continue to be lost or degraded through cumulative shoreline alterations, vegetation removal, hard armoring, grading, sand blankets, and other activities that reduce water quality, habitat, and lake resilience. Local governments, including Soil and Water Conservation Districts, watershed districts, watershed management organizations, counties, cities, and townships, are often the first point of contact for landowners seeking help with shoreline stabilization, restoration, permitting, and natural shoreline alternatives.

As the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and other partners improve shoreline evaluation, guidance, and implementation of public waters restoration and shoreline management requirements, additional workload will likely fall on local partners. Many SWCDs and watershed districts do not currently have dedicated funding or staff capacity to provide consistent technical assistance, site visits, project review, landowner support, monitoring, and follow-through for shoreline management.

Successful shoreline protection depends on timely, locally available assistance that helps landowners understand and implement natural shoreline practices before hard armoring or other damaging alterations occur.

### **Efforts to solve the problem**

The statewide Natural Shoreline Partnership has documented the continuing loss of natural shoreline and the need for stronger coordination, education, technical assistance, incentives, and restoration support. A Shoreline Protection Subcommittee later examined shoreline alteration management in more detail and identified a need to rebuild local and state technical capacity for natural shoreline restoration, bioengineering, landowner assistance, and coordinated review.

Local governments, SWCDs, watershed districts, and lake associations already provide outreach and technical support where capacity exists. However, this assistance is inconsistent statewide because it often depends on local funding, grants, or limited staff availability.

### **Is legislative action the best means of addressing the matter? If yes, what is the purpose or intent of your proposal? If not, what advocacy steps could be taken with state or local government officials?**

Yes. Legislative action is likely needed to establish dedicated and ongoing state funding for local shoreline management assistance.

The purpose of legislative action would be to create a stable state funding source that supports SWCDs, watershed districts, watershed management organizations, and other local partners in providing shoreline technical assistance, landowner site visits, project design support, permit coordination, monitoring, and implementation assistance.

If legislative action is not immediately pursued, Minnesota Watersheds should advocate with DNR, BWSR, MPCA, and legislative committees to recognize shoreline management as a shared state-local responsibility and to include shoreline technical assistance in future state funding programs.

**Anticipated support or opposition**

Support is anticipated from watershed districts, watershed management organizations, SWCDs, lake associations, local governments, fisheries and habitat advocates, and organizations working to protect water quality and aquatic life.

Opposition or concern may come from parties concerned about new state spending or increased local government involvement in shoreline projects. These concerns can be addressed by emphasizing that the funding is intended to provide practical landowner assistance, improve consistency, reduce confusion, and support voluntary natural shoreline restoration before enforcement or regulatory conflicts occur.

**This issue: (check all that apply)**

Applies only to our district		Requires legislative action	x
Applies only to 1 or 2 regions		Requires state agency advocacy	x
Applies to the entire state	x	Impacts MW bylaws or MOPP	

## **RESOLUTION #2: SUPPORTING STATE FUNDING FOR SWCD AND WATERSHED DISTRICT SHORELINE MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE**

**WHEREAS**, Minnesota's lakes, rivers, and public waters provide substantial public benefits, including water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, flood resilience, recreation, and property value protection; and

**WHEREAS**, Minnesota's natural shorelines continue to be lost or degraded through cumulative shoreline alterations, vegetation removal, hard armoring, grading, and other activities that reduce habitat and water quality benefits; and

**WHEREAS**, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is working to improve shoreline evaluation, guidance, and implementation of public waters restoration and shoreline management requirements; and

**WHEREAS**, improved shoreline evaluation and implementation will likely create additional workload for local governments, including Soil and Water Conservation Districts, watershed districts, watershed management organizations, counties, and other local partners; and

**WHEREAS**, local governments are often the first point of contact for landowners seeking assistance with shoreline stabilization, restoration, permitting, and natural shoreline alternatives; and

**WHEREAS**, many SWCDs and watershed districts do not currently have adequate dedicated funding or staff capacity to provide consistent technical assistance, site evaluations, landowner support, and project follow-through for shoreline management; and

**WHEREAS**, successful shoreline protection and restoration depends on timely, practical, and locally available technical assistance that helps landowners understand and implement natural shoreline practices before hard-armoring or other damaging alterations occur;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds supports the creation of dedicated state funding to assist Soil and Water Conservation Districts, watershed districts, watershed management organizations, and other local government partners with shoreline management technical assistance, project review, landowner support, and implementation.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this funding should support local staff time, technical evaluations, landowner site visits, project design assistance, permit coordination, monitoring, and follow-up needed to advance natural shoreline protection and restoration.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds supports state funding that recognizes shoreline management as a shared state-local responsibility requiring adequate and ongoing local capacity.

# **Background Information**

## **2026 Minnesota Watersheds Resolution #3**

**Proposing Watershed:** Carnelian Marine St. Croix Watershed District

**Contact Name:** Mike Isensee

**Phone Number:** 612-839-6492

**Email Address:** mike.isensee@cmsc wd.org

**Resolution Title:** Supporting Statewide Training and Certification for Shoreline Management Staff

### **Background that led to the submission of this resolution**

Shoreline management decisions often require technical evaluation of erosion causes, shoreline condition, vegetation, soils, slopes, wave energy, ice action, habitat impacts, water quality impacts, and the suitability of proposed stabilization or restoration methods. Inconsistent understanding and application of shoreline standards can result in inconsistent permitting decisions, landowner confusion, unnecessary hard armoring, and continued loss of natural shoreline functions.

The Wetland Conservation Act provides a useful model for structured training, certification, and interagency review that helps support consistent implementation across jurisdictions. Shoreline management would benefit from a similar statewide training and certification program for state and local staff involved in shoreline evaluation, permitting, restoration, compliance, and technical assistance.

### **Efforts to solve the problem**

The Natural Shoreline Partnership's Shoreline Protection Subcommittee reviewed DNR Public Waters Rules, riprap, sand blankets, ice heaves, general permits, enforcement procedures, and local shoreline assessment work. The Subcommittee identified the need for shared training standards, consistent terminology, common evaluation methods, and improved understanding of natural shoreline restoration and bioengineering alternatives.

Local staff, SWCDs, watershed districts, counties, cities, townships, and DNR staff currently work on shoreline issues, but training and technical capacity vary significantly across the state. This creates inconsistent outcomes for landowners and natural resource protection.

### **Is legislative action the best means of addressing the matter? If yes, what is the purpose or intent of your proposal? If not, what advocacy steps could be taken with state or local government officials?**

Legislative action may be needed if a formal statewide certification program requires statutory authority, dedicated funding, or direction to state agencies.

The purpose of legislative action would be to direct or fund the development of a statewide shoreline management training and certification program, modeled in part on the structured training and certification approach used for Wetland Conservation Act implementation. The program should include shoreline condition evaluation, erosion drivers, natural shoreline design, bioengineering methods, public waters permitting requirements, restoration standards, vegetation protection, habitat impacts, enforcement considerations, and long-term maintenance.

If legislation is not required, Minnesota Watersheds should advocate for DNR, BWSR, MPCA, SWCDs, watershed districts, and other partners to develop and implement the training program administratively.

### **Anticipated support or opposition**

Support is anticipated from watershed districts, SWCDs, local governments, state agency staff, lake

associations, and professional organizations seeking more consistent shoreline evaluation and permitting.

Opposition or concern may come from those concerned about additional certification requirements, cost, or administrative burden. These concerns can be addressed by designing the program to improve consistency, provide practical field-based training, and support better landowner service rather than simply adding new requirements.

**This issue: (check all that apply)**

Applies only to our district		Requires legislative action	x
Applies only to 1 or 2 regions		Requires state agency advocacy	x
Applies to the entire state	x	Impacts MW bylaws or MOPP	

**RESOLUTION #3: SUPPORTING STATEWIDE TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION FOR SHORELINE MANAGEMENT STAFF**

**WHEREAS**, shoreline management decisions often require technical evaluation of erosion causes, shoreline condition, vegetation, soils, slopes, wave energy, ice action, habitat impacts, water quality impacts, and the suitability of proposed stabilization or restoration methods; and

**WHEREAS**, inconsistent understanding and application of shoreline standards can result in inconsistent permitting decisions, landowner confusion, unnecessary hard armoring, and continued loss of natural shoreline functions; and

**WHEREAS**, the Wetland Conservation Act provides a useful model for technical training, certification, and interagency review that helps support more consistent implementation across jurisdictions; and

**WHEREAS**, shoreline management would benefit from a similar structured training and certification program for state and local staff involved in shoreline evaluation, permitting, restoration, compliance, and technical assistance; and

**WHEREAS**, watershed districts, watershed management organizations, SWCDs, counties, cities, townships, and DNR staff would benefit from shared training standards, consistent terminology, and common evaluation methods; and

**WHEREAS**, certification-based training would help ensure that shoreline evaluations consider the cause and degree of shoreline change, the impacts of proposed alterations, and the availability of natural or bioengineering alternatives before structural hard armoring is authorized;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds supports development of a statewide shoreline management training and certification program for state and local staff, modeled in part on the structured training and certification approach used for Wetland Conservation Act implementation.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the training program should include evaluation of shoreline condition, erosion drivers, natural shoreline design, bioengineering methods, public waters permitting requirements, restoration standards, vegetation protection, habitat impacts, enforcement considerations, and long-term maintenance.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds supports development of a consistent shoreline evaluation framework that can be used by DNR staff, SWCDs, watershed districts, counties, cities, townships, and other local partners.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds supports the use of technical evaluation panels or similar interagency review processes for complex shoreline alteration proposals, similar in concept to technical review processes used under the Wetland Conservation Act.

# **Background Information**

## **2026 Minnesota Watersheds Resolution #4**

**Proposing Watershed:** Carnelian Marine St. Croix Watershed District

**Contact Name:** Mike Isensee

**Phone Number:** 612-839-6492

**Email Address:** mike.isensee@cmsc wd.org

**Resolution Title:** Supporting Improved Public Education and Updated Shoreline Management Guidance

### **Background that led to the submission of this resolution**

Landowners, contractors, consultants, local officials, and local government staff rely on public-facing information from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources when evaluating shoreline stabilization, restoration, and alteration options.

The Natural Shoreline Subcommittee identified several recurring issues with DNR guidance for riprap, sand blanket, and ice-heave “no permit required” documents. Requirements are often unmet, misunderstood or ignored; “no permit required” shoreline alterations are difficult to track and verify; criteria for determining a demonstrated need for riprap are ambiguous or inconsistently applied;

The outdated or incomplete shoreline alteration guidance documents can create confusion and may encourage practices that are not aligned with current natural shoreline science, restoration standards, state statute, or the protection of public waters.

Older riprap guidance and similar materials contribute to misunderstanding about when riprap is appropriate, what alternatives should be considered, and how natural shoreline functions should be protected. Public education materials should clearly identify the limited circumstances in which riprap, sand blankets, and ice-ridge repair are appropriate, explain the benefits of natural shorelines, including water quality protection, fish and wildlife habitat, slope stability, wave energy dissipation, climate resilience, and long-term property protection.

### **Efforts to solve the problem**

The Natural Shoreline Partnership developed Minnesota’s Vanishing Natural Shorelines, which documented the scale of natural shoreline loss and the connection between shoreline alteration and degraded lake quality. The Shoreline Protection Subcommittee then identified the need to update public-facing shoreline materials, improve consistency in messaging, and better explain the difference between natural shoreline restoration, bioengineered stabilization, riprap, retaining walls, beach creation, vegetation removal, grading, and other shoreline alterations.

Local governments, SWCDs, watershed districts, lake associations, and state agencies already provide public education, but messaging is not always consistent and may be undermined by older or outdated state guidance still available to the public.

### **Is legislative action the best means of addressing the matter? If yes, what is the purpose or intent of your proposal? If not, what advocacy steps could be taken with state or local government officials?**

Legislative action is not necessarily required if DNR can update all public-facing guidance, webpages, fact sheets, and permit materials administratively.

However, legislative action may be appropriate if agency direction or funding is needed to ensure outdated materials are replaced and updated guidance is developed in coordination with local governments, SWCDs, watershed districts, BWSR, MPCA, lake associations, and other partners.

The purpose or intent would be to ensure that Minnesota’s public shoreline guidance reflects current natural shoreline science, state statute, best available restoration practices, and clear permitting expectations.

If legislation is not pursued, Minnesota Watersheds should advocate directly with DNR and partner agencies to replace outdated shoreline alteration guidance, including older “Shoreline Alterations: Riprap” materials, and to coordinate statewide public education on natural shoreline protection and restoration.

**Anticipated support or opposition**

Support is anticipated from watershed districts, SWCDs, lake associations, local governments, habitat advocates, and organizations working to improve water quality and shoreline stewardship.

Opposition or concern may come from various divisions or regional offices within the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources that have relied on existing shoreline alteration guidance, fact sheets, and implementation practices for decades. Concerns may include staff capacity to update guidance, uncertainty about changing long-standing interpretations, the need for internal consistency across DNR programs and regions, concern that revised materials could increase review workload, and reluctance to create expectations that existing past practices were inadequate or inconsistent.

**This issue: (check all that apply)**

Applies only to our district		Requires legislative action	
Applies only to 1 or 2 regions		Requires state agency advocacy	x
Applies to the entire state	x	Impacts MW bylaws or MOPP	

**RESOLUTION #4: SUPPORTING IMPROVED PUBLIC EDUCATION AND UPDATED SHORELINE MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE**

**WHEREAS**, landowners, contractors, consultants, local officials, and local government staff rely on public-facing information from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources when evaluating shoreline stabilization, restoration, and alteration options; and

**WHEREAS**, outdated shoreline alteration guidance can create confusion and may encourage practices that are not fully aligned with current natural shoreline science, restoration standards, state statute, or the protection of public waters; and

**WHEREAS**, the continued public availability of older shoreline riprap guidance may contribute to misunderstanding about when riprap is appropriate, what alternatives should be considered, and how natural shoreline functions should be protected; and

**WHEREAS**, Minnesota’s public education materials should clearly explain the benefits of natural shorelines, including water quality protection, fish and wildlife habitat, slope stability, wave energy dissipation, climate resilience, and long-term property protection; and

**WHEREAS**, effective public education should help landowners understand the difference between natural shoreline restoration, bioengineered stabilization, riprap, retaining walls, beach creation, vegetation removal, grading, and other shoreline alterations; and

**WHEREAS**, updated public education materials should support consistent messaging by DNR, SWCDs, watershed districts, counties, cities, townships, lake associations, contractors, consultants, and other partners;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds supports the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources updating its public-facing shoreline management webpages, guidance documents, permit materials, and educational resources to reflect current natural shoreline science, state statute, and best available restoration practices.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds supports replacing outdated “Shoreline Alterations: Riprap” guidance and similar materials with updated guidance that more clearly prioritizes avoidance, minimization, natural shoreline restoration, bioengineering, vegetation protection, and long-term shoreline function.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that updated public education materials should clearly identify when permits or notifications are required, what activities may violate public waters rules, and what alternatives are available to landowners before hard armoring is pursued.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds supports coordinated public education among DNR, BWSR, SWCDs, watershed districts, counties, cities, townships, lake associations, and other partners to promote consistent shoreline management information statewide.

# **Background Information**

## **2026 Minnesota Watersheds Resolution #5**

**Proposing Watershed:** Carnelian Marine St. Croix Watershed District

**Contact Name:** Mike Isensee

**Phone Number:** 612-839-6492

**Email Address:** mike.isensee@cmsc wd.org

**Resolution Title:** Supporting Rule and Process Improvements for Public Waters Shoreline Alteration Management

### **Background that led to the submission of this resolution**

Minnesota Rules part 6115.0215 establishes requirements for restoration and alteration of public waters, including activities that affect shorelines, beds, banks, and public water resources. Consistent implementation of Minnesota's public waters rules is necessary to protect natural shorelines, water quality, aquatic habitat, and the public interest in lakes, rivers, and streams.

Watershed districts and other local government partners have identified discrepancies and inconsistencies in the implementation of shoreline alteration rules, guidance, permitting, notification, and enforcement. These inconsistencies can result in landowner confusion, uneven regulatory outcomes, continued shoreline degradation, and reduced confidence in state and local shoreline management programs.

Shoreline alteration decisions should include a clear evaluation of existing shoreline condition, the cause and degree of shoreline change, the proposed alteration, less-impactful alternatives, and cumulative impacts to public waters. Contractors who repeatedly conduct shoreline alterations without required notice, permits, or approvals can create significant damage to public waters and place landowners and local governments in difficult compliance situations.

### **Efforts to solve the problem**

The Natural Shoreline Partnership's Shoreline Protection Subcommittee reviewed challenges with existing state and local shoreline rules, DNR Public Waters Restoration Rules, shoreline assessments, sand blankets, ice heaves, general permits, and DNR enforcement procedures. The Subcommittee concluded that DNR Public Waters Rules are not necessarily the primary barrier to natural shoreline protection. Rather, the more significant problems are how shoreline alteration rules are expressed to the public, how those rules are administered, and how governments coordinate with each other on projects that span jurisdictional boundaries.

The Subcommittee developed recommendations to update DNR guidance, improve coordination among DNR and local governments, develop administrative procedures for "no permit required" shoreline work, create tools to determine demonstrated erosion need, strengthen training, clarify grading and filling requirements, encourage contractor training or certification, review General Permit barriers, and rebuild technical capacity for natural shoreline restoration and bioengineered shoreline design.

### **Is legislative action the best means of addressing the matter? If yes, what is the purpose or intent of your proposal? If not, what advocacy steps could be taken with state or local government officials?**

Legislative action may be needed if rule changes, agency direction, funding, or statutory clarification are necessary to ensure consistent statewide implementation of public waters shoreline alteration requirements.

The purpose or intent of legislative action would be to support clearer, more consistent, and more

coordinated implementation of Minnesota Rules part 6115.0215 and related public waters shoreline alteration requirements. This may include direction or support for DNR to:

1. Develop a consistent shoreline evaluation process;
2. Clarify how demonstrated erosion need is evaluated before riprap or other hard armoring is authorized;
3. Establish administrative procedures for “no permit required” shoreline work;
4. Improve coordination between DNR, local governments, SWCDs, and watershed districts;
5. Create a technical evaluation panel or similar interagency review process for complex or sensitive shoreline alteration proposals;
6. Ensure consistent DNR processes and determinations across regions and area offices;
7. Strengthen procedures for recurring contractor violations involving shoreline modifications completed without required notification, permits, or approvals; and
8. Review General Permit processes that may discourage natural or bioengineered shoreline alternatives.

If legislative action is not immediately pursued, Minnesota Watersheds should advocate directly with DNR, MPCA, BWSR, counties, SWCDs, watershed districts, and other partners to implement these process improvements administratively.

**Anticipated support or opposition**

Support is anticipated from watershed districts, watershed management organizations, SWCDs, local governments, lake associations, fisheries and habitat advocates, and organizations working to protect water quality, aquatic life, and public waters.

Opposition or concern may come from shoreline contractors, some riparian landowners, and parties concerned about additional process requirements, delays, or limits on shoreline hardening. These concerns can be addressed through clear guidance, timely review procedures, contractor training, practical landowner assistance, and recognition that the resolution seeks consistency, coordination, and protection of public waters rather than unnecessary regulation.

**This issue: (check all that apply)**

Applies only to our district		Requires legislative action	x
Applies only to 1 or 2 regions		Requires state agency advocacy	x
Applies to the entire state	x	Impacts MW bylaws or MOPP	

## **RESOLUTION #5: SUPPORTING RULE AND PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS FOR PUBLIC WATERS SHORELINE MANAGEMENT**

**WHEREAS**, Minnesota Rules part 6115.0215 establishes requirements for restoration and alteration of public waters, including activities that affect shorelines, beds, banks, and public water resources; and

**WHEREAS**, consistent implementation of Minnesota's public waters rules is necessary to protect natural shorelines, water quality, aquatic habitat, and the public interest in lakes, rivers, and streams; and

**WHEREAS**, watershed districts and other local government partners have identified discrepancies and inconsistencies in the implementation of shoreline alteration rules, guidance, permitting, notification, and enforcement; and

**WHEREAS**, inconsistent application of public waters rules can result in landowner confusion, uneven regulatory outcomes, continued shoreline degradation, and reduced confidence in state and local shoreline management programs; and

**WHEREAS**, shoreline alteration decisions should include a clear evaluation of the cause, severity, and extent of shoreline change, the proposed alteration, the availability of less-impactful alternatives, and the cumulative impact to public waters; and

**WHEREAS**, contractors who repeatedly conduct shoreline alterations without required notice, permits, or approvals can create significant damage to public waters and place landowners and local governments in difficult compliance situations; and

**WHEREAS**, clearer rules, procedures, and enforcement expectations would improve consistency, fairness, and environmental outcomes for landowners, contractors, local governments, and state agencies;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds supports rule, guidance, and process improvements by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to ensure consistent implementation of Minnesota Rules part 6115.0215 and related public waters shoreline alteration requirements.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds supports development and implementation of a consistent shoreline evaluation process that considers the existing shoreline condition, the cause and degree of shoreline change, the proposed alteration, natural shoreline alternatives, and the public water impacts of the proposed work.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds supports creation of a technical evaluation panel or similar interagency process for complex or potentially impactful shoreline alteration proposals, similar in concept to review processes used under the Wetland Conservation Act.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds supports improved procedures to ensure consistent DNR processes and determinations across regions and area offices.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds supports stronger and more consistent enforcement for recurring contractor violations involving shoreline modifications completed without required notification, permits, or approvals.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds supports rule and process changes that make shoreline management more understandable, consistent, timely, and effective for landowners, contractors, local governments, and state agencies while better protecting Minnesota’s public waters and natural shorelines.

# **Background Information**

## **2026 Minnesota Watersheds Resolution #6**

**Proposing Watershed:** Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District

**Contact Name:** Joni Giese

**Phone Number:** 952-440-0067

**Email Address:** jgiese@plslwd.org

**Resolution Title:** Seeking Revision of Minnesota State 477A.19 to Preserve \$10 million of Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Aid

### **Background that led to the submission of this resolution**

For over a decade \$10 million has been annually appropriated from the state general fund for Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention Aid pursuant Minnesota Statute 477A.19. The commissioner of revenue computes an amount of AIS prevention aid payable to each county in the state for the following year. Counties must use the proceeds solely to prevent the introduction or limit the spread of AIS at all access sites within the county. In recent years, Scott County has allocated AIS Prevention Aid to Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District (PLSLWD) to perform Curly-leaf pondweed treatments in District Lakes and to offset the cost of boat inspections at District lakes.

At part of the 2025 legislative session, Minnesota Statute 477A.19 was revised to reduce the annual appropriation by 50 percent (\$5 million) for aid payable in 2027 and thereafter. At current funding levels, the AIS Prevention Aid comprises 37 percent of PLSLWD's Aquatic vegetation management funding and comprises 50 percent of the PLSLWD's boat inspection funding.

Prior Lake is an extremely popular lake in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul metropolitan area, with large numbers of boaters bringing their watercraft to the lake and thus increasing the risk of AIS spread. A 50 percent reduction in state AIS Prevention Aid will have a significant and negative impact the PLSLWD's efforts to prevent the introduction and limit the spread of AIS. This issue is not limited to PLSLWD, the reduced funding negatively impacts counties, watershed organizations, soil and water conservation districts, lake associations, and other public agencies that work to prevent the spread of AIS.

### **Efforts to solve the problem**

In 2025, when the proposed funding reduction was first brought forward, numerous organizations lobbied to retain historic funding levels. These efforts were successful in preserving the \$10 million funding levels for 2025 and 2026 and delaying the reduced \$5 million funding level to 2027. A coalition of lake associations are currently organizing to lobby for the preservation of the \$10 million funding levels during the 2027 legislative session. Watershed organizations should join with partners to lobby for the preservation of the \$10 million funding level.

**Is legislative action the best means of addressing the matter? If yes, what is the purpose or intent of your proposal? If not, what advocacy steps could be taken with state or local government officials?**

Legislative action is the only means of addressing the matter as Minnesota

Statute 477A.19 calls for the funding level to be reduced to \$5 million in 2027. The intent of this proposal is to request that Minnesota Statute 477A.19 be revised to change 2027 funding to \$10 million and to remain at the \$10 million level thereafter.

**Anticipated support or opposition**

The DNR could also be a partner as they administer and support the program. Lake associations, soil and water conservation districts, lake resorts, and communities that rely on lake activities for economic development are likely partners in supporting this legislative revision. Likely detractors from this legislation may be organizations that advocate for smaller government spending.

**This issue: (check all that apply)**

Applies only to our district		Requires legislative action	x
Applies only to 1 or 2 regions		Requires state agency advocacy	
Applies to the entire state	x	Impacts MW bylaws or MOPP	

**RESOLUTION #6: SEEKING REVISION OF MINNESOTA STATE 477A.19 TO PRESERVE \$10 MILLION OF AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES PREVENTION AID**

**WHEREAS**, Minnesota Statute 477A.19 Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Aid, allocates funds to counties within Minnesota for the purpose of preventing the introduction of or limiting the spread of aquatic invasive species at all access sites within counties that receive the funding; and

**WHEREAS**, counties may appropriate a portion of the proceeds received from the state to provide funding for a joint powers board or cooperative agreement with another political subdivision, a soil and water conservation district in the county, a watershed district in the county, or a lake association located in the county; and

**WHEREAS**, for over a decade, the state has annually appropriated \$10 million from the general fund for Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Aid to Minnesota counties; and

**WHEREAS**, Minnesota Statute 477A.19 was revised in 2025 to reduce the annual appropriation from \$10 million to \$5 million starting in 2027; AND **WHEREAS**, watershed districts, soil and water conservation districts, and lake associations in the state depend on Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Aid to prevent the introduction of and limit the spread of aquatic invasive species; and

**WHEREAS**, the reduction of Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Aid will result in reduced prevention efforts that will harm water resources in the state and negatively impact habitat, recreation, and economic development within the state.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds seeks to revise Minnesota State 477A.19 to preserve annual Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Aid at \$10 million payable in 2027 and annually thereafter.

# **Background Information**

## **2026 Minnesota Watersheds Resolution #7**

**Proposing Watershed:** Two Rivers Watershed District

**Contact Name:** Dan Money

**Phone Number:** 218-843-3333

**Email Address:** dan.money@tworiverswd.com

**Resolution Title:** Seeking Establishment of Hazard Mitigation Fund

### **Background that led to the submission of this resolution**

Watershed Districts have a long history of fighting floods and reducing flood damages. Severe and repeated flooding is documented throughout MN. Current state funding to recover from disasters is available through MN Statute 12A, and funding to prevent/mitigate flooding is available through DNR's Flood Hazard Mitigation Grant Program under MN Statute 103F. According to DNR, the current known funding needs total \$2.13 million, however in the 2026 session the legislature only approved \$9 million in the bonding bill to address the problem. In fact, since 2010 there has been a steady decline in the funding of this program, and no funding was approved in 2016, 2019, 2021, 2022, and 2024. Therefore, it is apparent that other sources of funding are needed to meet the significant need.

### **Efforts to solve the problem**

Over the past 5 years, meetings have been held with MN DNR to streamline their grant program and bring attention to the needs. This resulted in DNR overhauling the application process and this past session DNR asked for \$45 million to fund the program.

In addition, several meetings were held with various Senators and Representatives. While this was mildly effective, the result was still a significant under-funding of the program. However, HF 4581 and SF 5002 were introduced in 2026 to establish an additional program through the MN Department of Homeland Security Emergency Management that would provide an additional resource to provide funding for prevention / mitigation of natural disasters, including flooding. Although introduced, these bills were not heard in committee.

This resolution seeks to build upon Minnesota Watersheds 22-05 resolution that seeks stable funding for this issue. It is suggested that this issue should be considered one of the highest legislative priorities for the upcoming legislative session.

### **Is legislative action the best means of addressing the matter? If yes, what is the purpose or intent of your proposal? If not, what advocacy steps could be taken with state or local government officials?**

YES. In order to provide a more stable, reliable source of funding that will help to mitigate the effects of severe and repeated flooding HF 4581/SF 5002 are proposed. These bills will create a new program and a new funding source to supplement existing sources which are dreadfully underfunded. It is proposed that the fund be used for hazard mitigation planning and projects that diminish the potential effects of emergencies through long term risk reduction. The new proposal is modelled after MN Statute 12A and therefore follows a tried and true example of success.

### **Anticipated support or opposition**

Potential Support: MN Homeland Security Emergency Management; MN Association of Emergency Managers; Association of MN Counties; Association of Townships; League of MN Cities

Potential Opposition: unknown

**This issue: (check all that apply)**

Applies only to our district		Requires legislative action	x
Applies only to 1 or 2 regions		Requires state agency advocacy	x
Applies to the entire state	x	Impacts MW bylaws or MOPP	

**RESOLUTION #7: SEEKING ESTABLISHMENT OF HAZARD MITIGATION FUND**

**WHEREAS**, Severe flooding is known to occur repeatedly within the State of Minnesota, costing both public and private entities millions of dollars for repair and replacement of infrastructure, damage to homes, erosion and sediment control, and damage to cropland, and

**WHEREAS**, flooding also has severe and repeated impacts to water quality and habitat from erosion, sedimentation, nutrient loading, raw sewage discharges, and chemical spillage, and

**WHEREAS**, economic studies have estimated that for every dollar spent on flood damage reduction there is a six dollar return on investment, and

**WHEREAS**, The DNR's Flood Damage Reduction grant program (FHMG) under MN Statute 103F has historically been a successful tool for local governments to utilize to design and build projects to reduce and prevent flooding, protect the environment, and prevent social and economic losses, and

**WHEREAS**, The DNR's FHMG has not recently been funded adequately by the Legislature, in fact annual bonding appropriations have been significantly declining over the past 10 years with no funding appropriated in 5 out of the past 11 years. Current 2026 legislative appropriations for hazard mitigation funding only amount to 4% of the documented need, and

**WHEREAS**, The cost of construction continues to increase as proposed shovel ready projects continue to go unfunded, and

**WHEREAS**, additional funding sources and programs will be necessary to keep up with the need for hazard mitigation projects. In the 2026 legislative session HF 4581 and SF 5002 were introduced to address the problem but were not passed out of committees.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts pass a resolution to make hazard mitigation funding a top 2027 legislative priority and direct its lobbyist to work on passage of HF 4581 and SF 5002 as introduced in the 2026 legislative session.

# **Background Information**

## **2026 Minnesota Watersheds Resolution #8**

**Proposing Watershed:** Capitol Region Watershed District

**Contact Name:** Anna Eleria

**Phone Number:** 651-644-8888

**Email Address:** aeleria@capitolregionwd.org

**Resolution Title:** Seeking Legislation that Allows Stormwater as an Alternative Water Source for Outdoor Uses

### **Background that led to the submission of this resolution**

The MN Plumbing Board, a board of the MN Department of Labor and Industry (DLI), is proposing revisions to Chapter 15 of the Uniform Plumbing Code and the 2020 MN Plumbing Code that would effectively prohibit stormwater as an alternative source of water for non-potable uses. Key proposed changes include prohibiting stormwater as an allowable source of water for irrigation and other outdoor uses, expanding plumbing code jurisdiction from buildings to entire sites, and requiring installation of irrigation systems by licensed plumbers which would displace existing landscape and irrigation professionals, and requiring usage of plumbing code-certified materials.

Stormwater reuse is a proven, cost-effective practice that protects lakes and rivers, conserves groundwater, improves water quality, reduces flooding, and supports climate resilience. Eliminating or restricting reuse would remove a critical tool used by municipalities who depend on groundwater for drinking water and seek to conserve it for that use, and watershed districts and municipalities that rely on reuse projects to meet MS4 permit requirements, particularly in areas where infiltration is not feasible.

The proposed changes create significant environmental, financial, and regulatory concerns. They could render existing reuse systems non-compliant, require costly retrofits, and jeopardize millions of dollars in public investments funded through Clean Water Fund grants administered by MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), MN Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), and Metropolitan Council (Met Council), and local capital budgets.

Additionally, the proposal conflicts with longstanding state policies and guidance encouraging stormwater reuse, including MPCA stormwater guidance, the Metropolitan Council's 2050 Water Plan, and legislative directives to advance a framework for water reuse practices. It also conflicts with local ordinances, such as one in Lake Elmo, that require stormwater reuse to conserve groundwater. It also contradicts the purpose of the State Interagency Workgroup for Stormwater Capture and Use (SCU), of which the MN Department of Labor and Industry is a member of, for advancing the development and implementation of safe and sustainable stormwater capture and use practices. This group committed to continue active participation in the work group and support for a broad stakeholder engagement process to ensure a coordinated, collaborative and transparent approach to SCU guidance and policy in Minnesota.

### **Efforts to solve the problem**

Minnesota Watersheds and Capitol Region Watershed District are working closely with a

large and broad coalition group who share similar concerns. Key members of the coalition so far include the League of MN Cities, MN Cities Stormwater Coalition, MN Nursery and Landscape Association, MN Farmers Union and many others. For a full list, see the information below. Efforts to address these concerns include:

- Communicating with watershed districts and watershed management organizations to raise awareness of the issue, keep them informed of how they can help, and the activities of the coalition group
- Reaching out to various state agencies and boards including the Minnesota Plumbing Board, MN Department of Labor and Industry, MN Department of Public Health, MN Pollution Control Agency, MN Board of Water and Soil Resources, and others. The outreach has included notifying them of the proposed changes and our concerns
- Initiating outreach to legislators, counties, and conservation organizations
- Developing shared messaging, talking points and response strategies with the broad coalition group
- Raising concerns about the lack of coordination with agencies responsible for water quality and stormwater management

To date, stakeholders are responding quickly and helping to get the word out to the groups and individuals listed above and in turn, they are also reaching out to State agency leaders and legislators and expressing their concerns. In addition, a request has been made for a special Plumbing Board meeting to show opposition to their proposed changes.

**Is legislative action the best means of addressing the matter? If yes, what is the purpose or intent of your proposal? If not, what advocacy steps could be taken with state or local government officials?**

Legislative actions are needed to address this issue. The intent of this resolution is to:

- Prevent adoption of plumbing code revisions that prohibit stormwater reuse
- Explicitly allow for stormwater capture and use for irrigation and other outdoor non-potable uses in State law
- Ensure coordination between the Plumbing Board, MPCA, MDH, BWSR, cities, watershed organizations, and other local governments
- Align plumbing regulations with existing state policies and guidelines supporting stormwater reuse, water conservation, groundwater protection, and climate resilience
- Protect prior public investments in stormwater reuse systems
- Maintain stormwater reuse as a viable strategy for MS4 compliance
- Ensure decisions on regulation and design for stormwater infrastructure are made by the appropriate agencies and practitioners

Recommended actions include:

- Legislation that allows stormwater reuse for irrigation and other outdoor uses. In 2025, Senate bill (S.F. No. 2442) was introduced and brought to the Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee. This committee passed an amended bill and referred it to the Health and Human Services Committee in 2026. It is our understanding that it remains in the hands of the Health and Human Services Committee who has not and will not conduct a hearing in the 2026 legislative session.
- Direction to the Minnesota Plumbing Board to pause all revisions to plumbing code (including Chapter 15) until interagency coordination and alignment is achieved
- Continued coordination and advocacy with state agencies and policymakers

**Anticipated support or opposition**

There is a growing broad coalition of groups who are partnering in efforts to prevent changes to the Minnesota Plumbing Code that would explicitly eliminate stormwater as an alternative source of water for outdoor uses. As of May 14, 2026, the list of partners include:

- League of Minnesota Cities
- Minnesota Cities Stormwater Coalition
- Minnesota Nursery & Landscape Association
- Minnesota Farmers Union
- Minnesota Watersheds
- LiUNA
- Associated General Contractors
- Housing First
- Minnesota Association of Cemeteries
- Minnesota Turf and Grounds Foundation
- Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs
- Irrigators Association of Minnesota
- Hospitality Minnesota
- Minnesota Golf Course Superintendents Association
- Freshwater Society
- American Society of Landscape Architects MN Chapter
- Anoka County
- Minnesota Chapter of the American Public Works Association

Groups who are or may be opposed to our efforts include:

- Minnesota Plumbing Board
- Minnesota Pipe Trades Association
- Minnesota Plumbing, Heating, and Cooling Contractors
- Plumbing unions

**This issue: (check all that apply)**

Applies only to our district		Requires legislative action	x
Applies only to 1 or 2 regions		Requires state agency advocacy	x
Applies to the entire state	x	Impacts MW bylaws or MOPP	

**RESOLUTION #8: SEEKING LEGISLATION THAT ALLOWS STORMWATER AS AN ALTERNATIVE WATER SOURCE FOR OUTDOOR USES**

**WHEREAS**, the Minnesota Plumbing Board, under the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI), is proposing revisions to Chapter 15 of the Uniform Plumbing Code and related provisions of the Minnesota Plumbing Code that would prohibit stormwater as an alternate source of water for irrigation and other outdoor non-potable uses; and

**WHEREAS**, stormwater reuse is a proven and cost-effective practice that protects lakes and rivers, conserves groundwater, improves water quality, reduces flooding, and supports climate resilience; and

**WHEREAS**, restricting stormwater reuse would remove a critical compliance and water-management tool for municipalities, watershed districts, watershed management organizations, and other local governments, particularly where groundwater resources are limited, where infiltration is not feasible and where reuse projects help meet MS4 permit requirements; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed code changes could render existing reuse systems non-compliant, require costly retrofits, and jeopardize significant public investments funded through local budgets and grants administered by Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), and the Metropolitan Council (Met Council); and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed changes conflict with the directives of the MN Legislature in 2015, 2017, and 2021 to advance safe and sustainable water reuse in Minnesota, including stormwater capture and use; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed changes conflict with longstanding state and local policies and guidance encouraging stormwater reuse including MPCA's Stormwater Manual and Met Council's 2025 Water Policy Plan;

**WHEREAS**, a broad coalition of local governments, watershed organizations, professional associations, businesses, and nonprofit partners has formed in support of preserving stormwater reuse as a lawful and practical water-management strategy; and

**WHEREAS**, Minnesota Senate Bill SF2442, a 2025 bill relating to the outdoor use of rainwater and stormwater, would authorize state agencies and local governments to allow untreated rainwater or stormwater for outdoor purposes when the probability of human or animal consumption or immersion is low or nonexistent, and was reported out of the Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee to the Health and Human Services Committee in March 2026.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds supports legislation to explicitly allow stormwater as an alternate water source for outdoor non-potable purposes, including irrigation; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds supports legislation to assign MPCA as the State agency responsible for oversight of stormwater capture and use systems; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds requests that the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry and the Minnesota Plumbing Board pause proposed

plumbing code revisions affecting stormwater reuse until interagency coordination and meaningful stakeholder engagement are completed; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that any future regulation of stormwater capture and use should align with existing State policy and guidelines, protect prior public investments, and preserve stormwater reuse as a viable strategy for water conservation, groundwater protection, and stormwater management.